

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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DODE-00 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3185

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 3 MONTEVIDEO 0544

ALSO FOR ITC & STR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, UY
SUBJ: NON RUBBER FOOTWEAR: AMCHAM PRESSES URUGUAYAN CASE

REF: (A) MONTEVIDEO 0542, (B) MONTEVIDEO 0545

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER (REFTEL) TO AMSSSADOR FROM THE US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN URUGUAY:

"SIR: THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE UNITED STATES IN URUGUAY GREATLY SHARES URUGUAY'S EXTREME ALARM OVER THE PROPOSED ACTION TO RESTRICT THIS XOUNTRY'S SHOE EXPORTS THROUGH A QUOTA SYSTEM. IN ORDER TO AVOID THE OVERNIGHT COLLAPSE OF THE URUGUAYAN SHOE EXPORT INDUSTRY, IT IS URGENTLY REQUESTED THAT THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY PRESENT THE UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES REGARDING THIS CASE TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND ITC TO OBTAIN A FAIR AND REALISTIC QUOTA ALLOCATION BASED ON URUGUAY'S STATUS AS A NEW ENTRANT INTO THE US MARKET.
THE PROPOSED QUOTA SYSTEM IS UNDENIABLY UNFAIR TO THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE BY USING 1974 AS A BASE YEAR NOT ONLY DOES IT EXCLUDE URUGUAY FROM THOSE NATIONS ASSIGNED A DIRECT QUOTA BUT IT PLACES

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URUGUAY INTO A SPECIAL CATEGORY OF NATIONS WITH A COLLECTIVE PROPOSED QUOTA OF ONLY 2.6 MILLION PAIRS OF SHOES. THIS INJUSTICE WILL RESULT IN TBCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS FAR GREATER THAN NORMALLY MIGHT BE EXPECTED.

A RESTRICTIVE TRADE BARRIER IMPOSED ARBITRARILY ON URUGUAY'S SHOE EXPORTS TO THE U.S.A. WOULD BE A SERIOUS BACKWARD STEP TO THE UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY'S STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

AND A DISASTROUS IMPACT ON THE URUGUAYAN ECONOMY TO SAY
NOTHING OF CONTRIBUTING TO MASSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE FOOTWEAR
INDUSTRY. THE IMMEDIATE REALLOCATION OF THIS WORK FORCE WOULD
NOT BE POSSIBLE ADDING TO THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON A NE
Y SECTOR
OF THE URUGUAYAN PEOPLE. THE INAUGURAL REPERCUSSION ON THE

TRADITIONAL URUGUAYAN FRIENDSHIP TOWARD THE U.S.A. WOULD
RESULT IN A SEVERE SETBACK IN THE PUBLIC MIND AND BOUND TO
EVENTUALLY REFLECT ON AMERICAN BUSINESS AND OTHER INTERESTS
IN URUGUAY. IF URUGUAY, AS MANY OTHER COUNTRIES DO, HAD MORE
MAJOR EXPORTS TO THE U.S.A., THIS IMPACT WOULD NOT BE SO GREAT
OR SIGNIFICANT. HOWVER, FOOTWEAR, AT PRESENT, COMPRIMES
25.2 PERCENT OF THE RELATIVELY SMALL P ORIENTED EXPORTS
FROM URUGUAY.

BACKGROUND. THE TRADE BALANCE URUGUAY-USA FIGURES
FROM JANUARY 1961 TO END OF JUNE 1976 (15 1/2 YEARS) SHOW
URUGUAYAN IMPORTS AT US\$495.5 MILLION AGAINST US\$292.5
MILLION EXPORTED WHICH MEANS A BALANCE OF US 203.0 MILLION
OR APPROXIMATELY IN FAVOR OF THE UNITED STATES.

US BALANCE OF TRADE WITH URUGUAY
(MILLION DOLLARS)

IMPORTS FROMT
EXPORTS TO NET BALANCE
USA USA OF TRADE
1961/70 304.9 201.7 103.2
.771 22.9 9.5 13.5
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1972	32.8	7.1	25.7
1973	24.6	10.8	"7 13.8
1974	FU 35.8	14.1	21.7
1975	53.5	25.8	(27.7
1976 (6 MOS)	21.0	23.5	2.5
TOTAL	495.5	292.5	203.0

MOREOVER, THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE DATA PERTAINING TO BALANCE
OF PAYMENTS SUCH AS INTEREST, ROYALTIES, DIVIDENDS, TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE FEES, SERVICE FEES, PROFITS AND OTHER REMITTANCES
AS WE DO NOT POSSESS DETAILED INFORMATION. HOWEVER, THESE
REMITTANCES ARE CONSIDERABLE IN AMOUNT AND FAVORABLE TO THE USA.

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT LEATHER FOOTWEAR IS NOW ONE OF URUGUAY'S
MAJOR NONTRADITIONAL EXPORT ITEMS TO THE USA. THE SLIGHT PLUS
FIGURES AGAINST THE FIGET SIX MONTHS OF 1976 INDICATES A
TENDENCY TO A MORE RATIONAL BALANCE SITUATION DURING THE COMING
YEARS AND TO WHICH URUGUAY REASONABLY HAS THE RIGHT TO HOPE
FOR AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF ABSORBING A SUBSTANTIALLY
NEGATIVEBALANCE.

THE AFOREMENTIONED US-URUGUAY TRADE BALANCE FIGURE HAS

BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY FAVORABLE TO THE US AND WE FEEL THIS COUNTRY HAS GOOD REASON TO APPEAL THAT A JUST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO POSSIBILITY OF REALLOCATION OF UNUSED QUOTAS. SPECIFICALLY, THIS COUNTRY ASKS THAT THESE QUOTAS BE INVESTIGATED WITH THE VIEW OF URUGUAY BEING CONSIDERED AS A NEW ENTRANT ON THE US MARKET. ALSO, URUGUAYAN FOOTWEAR VOLUME OF PRODUCTION IS DEFINITELY NOT COMPARABLE WITH THAT OF OTHER LARGER DEVELOPED NATIONS AND THEREFORE HARDLY INJURIOUS TO US DOMESTIC SHOE INDUSTRY EVEN ON A NO-QUOTA BASIS.

URUGUAY'S EXPORTS OF HIGH COST QUALITY SHOES TO THE USA REACHED A VOLUME OF 2,178,475 PAIRS IN 1976, SLIGHTLY LESS THAN HALF THE PRESENT CAPACITY EXPECTED FOR 1977 EXPORTS. THEREFORE, USING 1974 AS A BASIS FOR URUGUAY WOULD MEAN THE ABSOLUTE RUIN OF THE URUGUAYAN SHOE EXPORT INDUSTRY WHICH WAS DEVELOPED ON THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

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MARKET BY AMERICAN TECHNICIANS AND AMERICAN INTERESTS. THIS IMPORTANT LOCAL INDUSTRY IS NOW WHOLLY COMMITTED BEYOND ANY HOPE OF RECALL IN MATTERS OF LOANS, HEAVY CAPITAL INVESTMENTS, PERSONNEL COMMITMENTS, CONTRACTS AND OTHERS.

THIS INDUSTRY IS NOW GEARED TO PRODUCE A FORECASTED 4.9 MILLION PAIRS A YEAR OF HIGH QUALITY LEATHER FOOTWEAR FOR

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3186

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ALSO FOR ITC & STR

EXPORT. CONSIDERING THE SMALLNESS OF URUGUAY AND ITS POPULATION (2.8 MILLION) THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY WHATSOEVER OF THIS VOLUME BEING ABSORBED BY THE DOMESTIC MARKET AND THERE IS NO OUTLET ON ANY OTHER MARKET IN THE AREA. BESIDES THE DESIGNS, LAST, ETC. AND QUALITY ARE ON US SPECIFICATIONS AND NOT ADAPTABLE TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET EITHER AND A CHANGE-OVER WOULD REQUIRE FROM 9 TO 18 MONTHS.

CONSIDERATION FOR FAIR QUOTA ALLOCATION TO URUGUAY. THE ITC HAS MADE NO RECOMMENDATION FOR THE REALLOCATION OF UNUSED QUOTAS BUT RECOMMENDS THAT INVESTIGATIONS BE INITIATED TO DETERMINE IF CERTAIN ALLOCATIONS SHOULD BE DELAYED TO ALLOW NEW ENTRANTS INTO THE MARKET. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ITC WILL DO ITS UTMOST TO BE FAIR AND THAT URUGUAY WILL RECEIVE THE REASONABLE CONSIDERATIONS BEING OFFERED TO OTHER COUNTRIES. FOR SOME COUNTRIES THE 1974 BASE YEAR IS HIGHER THAN ACTUAL ACTUAL SALES POSSIBILITIES AND RESULTING IN A MORE FAVORABLE POSITION WITH A QUOTA THAN WITHOUT. IT IS DEFINITELY THE CONTRARY FOR URUGUAY WHERE

A QUOTA BASED ARBITRARILY ON 1974 FIGURES WOULD BE ENTIRELY INEQUITABLE AND UNFAIR IN COMPARISON.

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THE FOLLOWING ARE THE PRINCIPAL REASONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH SUPPORT URUGUAY'S REQUEST FOR A REALISTIC QUOTA:

(1) AS A SMALLER DEVELOPING NATION, URUGUAY DID NOT REALLY START ITS FOOTWEAR EXPORT PRODUCTION UNTIL 1973. CONSEQUENTLY, EXPORTS TO THE USA OF ITS INCIPIENT INDUSTRY DURING 1974 WERE NEGLIGIBLE (213,042 PAIRS FORMING 0.06 PERCENT OF TOTAL US FOOTWEAR IMPORTS) AND CANNOT REASONABLY BE CONSIDERED REPRESENTATIVE OR INDICATIVE.

(2) THESE FIGURES ARE UNREALISTIC AS A BASIS FOR DETERMINING AN EQUITABLE YEARLY EXPORT QUOTA. THE 213,042 PAIRS SHIPPED TO THE US MARKET IN 1974 IS SLIGHTLY LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE 2,178 MILLION PAIRS SHIPPED IN 1976. TAKING 1974 AS THE BASE YEAR AND APPLYING THE ITC CRITERIA OF TWO THIRDS OF 1976 IMPORTED VOLUMES AS AN OVERALL AVERAGE, URUGUAY WOULD BE PENALIZED BY A 40 PERCENT SURCHARGE ON 96 PERCENT OF ITS PROJECTED 1977 OR 1978 EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES. IN CONTRAST, WITH THIS NEW CRITERIA, OTHER COUNTRIES ALREADY ESTABLISHED WELL BEFORE 1974 WOULD BE PENALIZED ON ONLY 33 PERCENT OF THEIR EXPORTS, AGAINST THE 1974 BASE YEAR.

(3) EVEN WITHOUT A QUOTA IN 1977 OR 1978 THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF URUGUAY'S SHOE INDUSTRY IS NOT COMPARABLE TO THE OTHER SHOE MANUFACTURING COUNTRIES. AS AN EXAMPLE WE CITE THAT URUGUAY'S EXPANDING EXPORT INDUSTRY TO THE USA INITIATED IN

1973 WHILE ITALY STARTED IN 1956, SPAIN IN 1961 AND BRAZIL IN 1967. IN ADDITION, URUGUAY IS A LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRY WITH FEW RESOURCES WHICH REINFORCES THIS ARGUMENT.
(4) AS 1974 IS TO BE THE BASE YEAR, VARIOUS COUNTRIES WILL APPARENTLY BE ASSIGNED QUOTAS SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN THEIR ACTUAL 1976 SALES TO THE US, I.E.: ITALY, ARGENTINA, ETC. THIS MEANS THAT THESE COUNTRIES WILL NOW HAVE AN EXTREME ADVANTAGE ON EXPORTS TO THE US VERSUS URUGUAY. THIS UNFAIR ADVANTAGE WOULD BE GRANTED ARBITRARILY BY THE QUOTA SYSTEM, INASMUCH AS PRACTICALLY ALL URUGUAYAN EXPORTS WILL HAVE TO PAY 40 PERCENT TARIFFS WHEREAS THE FAVORED COUNTRIES WILL ONLY PAY NORMAL TARIFFS NOT ONLY FOR THE CURRENT LEVELS OF EXPORTS
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(1976) BUT FOR INCREMENTAL EXPORT VOLUMES WHICH THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY LOST TO COUNTRIES LIKE URUGUAY ON A FAIR COMPETITIVE BASIS. THIS MEANS THAT THE PROPOSED QUOTAS, WITHOUT OBTAINING THE BENEFIT OF REDUCED IMPORTS FOR THE US, WILL SIMPLY REDIRECT IMPORTS TO BE INCREASED FROM SOME ACCIDENTALLY FAVORED NATIONS AT THE EXPENSE OF "NEW ENTRANT" COUNTRIES LIKE URUGUAY ONLY BECAUSE 1974 WAS SELECTED AS THE BASE YEAR.

(5) SLIGHTLY OVER 60 PERCENT OF ALL FOOTWEAR PRESENTLY IMPORTED INTO THE USA IS LOWER PRICED SYNTHETIC AND BY COUNTRY DURING 1974 IT BREAKS DOWN AS FOLLOWS: TAIWAN 99 PERCENT, ITALY 29 PERCENT, SPAIN 19 PERCENT, BRAZIL 9 PERCENT, KOREA 62 PERCENT, ALL OTHER 66 PERCENT. PRACTICALLY ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT URUGUAY (100 PERCENT LEATHER) INCLUDE SOME PERCENTAGE OF NON-LEATHER SHOES. URUGUAY ONLY EXPORTS HIGH QUALITY AND ALL LEATHER AND THEREFORE COMPETES ONLY AGAINST A MARKET OF HIGHER QUALITY PRODUCTS WITHOUT CAUSING UNDUE INJURY.

(6) ESTIMATED FOB PRICES FOR THIS YEAR WILL PRICE URUGUAY LEATHER SHOES AT SLIGHTLY OVER \$6.00 PER PAIR, WHICH GO ON SALE FROM 18 TO 24 DOLLARS A PAIR TO THE US CONSUMER. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THESE RETAIL PRICES SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED INJURIOUS TO THE US PRODUCERS WHEN COMPARED TO AVERAGE COST OF \$3.11 ON ALL IMPORTS FOR ALL TYPES OF FOOTWEAR AND FOR SOME COUNTRIES LOW AS \$1.18.

(7) THE QUALITY OF URUGUAYAN LEATHER FOOTWEAR, APART FROM ADEQUATE PRICING, IS PROBABLY THE BEST IMPORTED BY THE US MARKET. THIS IS BORNE OUT BY THE INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM US IMPORTERS THAT THE CONSUMER RETURN ON URUGUAYAN SHOES IS ONLY A MERE 1.2 PERCENT AGAINST 5.6 PERCENT RETURN ON EUROPEAN MANUFACTURE, 7.2 PERCENT ON BRAZILIAN SHOES AND AS HIGH AS 17 PERCENT ON ARGENTINE.

(8) A TARIFF OF 40 PERCENT OVER AND ABOVE THE PROPOSED QUOTA IS NOT PROHIBITIVE FOR MOST COUNTRIES THAT HAVE A FAIR QUOTA AS IT IS APPLICABLE ON ALL TYPES OF FOOTWEAR INCLUDING LOWER PRICED NON-LEATHER AND LEATHER FOOTWEAR. HOWEVER, 40

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PERCENT TARIFFS OVER AND ABOVE THE PROPOSED QUOTA ON COUNTRIES
EXPORTING A MIXTURE OF

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R 091810Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3187

UNCLAS SECTION 3 OF 3 MONTEVIDEO 0544

LEATHER AND SYNTHETIC FOOTWEAR IS ONLY IMPORTANT TO THE DEGREE
OF ONE OVER THE OTHER.

IN OTHER WORDS, AN ACROSS-THE-BOARD

TARIFF OF 40 PERCENT ON HIGHER PRICED GOODS (6.00 DOLLARS) IS

ABSOLUTELY

PROHIBITIVE WHEREAS IT MAY PROVE INSIGNIFICANT ON LOWER PRICED
GOODS (SYNTHETIC - 1.18 DOLLARS) EXTREMELY COMPETITIVE TO S
PRODUCTS. THE FACT THAT THE TARIFF DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN
LEATHER AND SYNTHETIC FOOTWEAR IS INEQUITABLE BUT SPECIFICALLY SO
TO URUGUAY WHICH ONLY PRODUCES LEATHER SHOES.

(9) THEFOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN URUGUAY DIRECTLY EMPLOYS 7500
WORKERS. A FURTHER 1500 PEOPLEARE INVOLVED INDIRECTLY, BRINGING
THE TOTAL TO 9000. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 85 PERCENT OF THIS WORK FORCE

WAS TAKEN ON DUE TO URUGUAY'S ENTRY INTO THE US EXPORT MARKET. THESE
PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES NOW STAND TO LOSE THEIR INCOME IF URUGUAY
DOES NOT RECEIVE FAIR AND JUST CONSIDERATION REGARDING THE PROPOSED
QUOTAS.

(10) THE INVESTMENT IN THIS INDUSTRY OF 26 FACTORIES AMOUNTS TO APPROXIMATELY TEN MILLION DOLLARS, PART OF WHICH IS US FINANCED
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AND STILL CARRIES A DEBT OF 740 THOUSAND DOLLARS. IF URUGUAY DOES NOT OBTAIN A REASONABLE QUOTA FOR ITS EXPANDING INDUSTRIES, THESE INVESTMENTS WOULD LARGEY HAVE TO BE WRITTEN OFF AS A LOSS. IN US TERMS, THESE FIGURES MAY SEEM SMALL. HOWEVER, IN TERMS OF URUGUAYAN INDUSTRY, PERTAINING TO AN UNDERDEVELOPED NATION STRIVING FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, THESE ARE MOST SIGNIFICANT.

CONCLUSION. URUGUAY HAS SUFFERED A PERIOD OF HARDSHIP, ECONOMIC STAGNATION, HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, NEGATIVE TRADE BALANCES AND A STAGGERING FOREIGN DEBT. ALSO, IN SPITE OF BEING ONE OF THE COUNTRIES MOST PUNISHED BY THE ENERGY CRISIS, IT HAS AND IS SLOWLY STRUGGLING UPWARDS THROUGH POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN ALL SECTORS OF ITS ECONOMY AND RESOURCES. IT IS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING ITS NONTRADITIONAL PRODUCTS TO ADD TO THE VITAL EXPORTS REQUIRED FOR SURVIVAL. OF THESE NEW PRODUCTS, THE LEATHER FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY, A FREE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, WAS UP UNTIL NOW THE MOST PROMISING.

URUGUAY DOES NOT ASK FOR ANYTHING UNUSUAL OR SPECIAL. IT SIMPLY ASKS FOR THE RIGHT TO TRADE FREELY AND FAIRLY WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THROUGH THIS TRADE TO REACH A REASONABLE FACTOR OF RECIPROCITY UNDER THE FURTHER CONSIDERATION THAT URUGUAY HAS ABSOLUTELY NO TRADE BARRIERS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. FURTHERMORE, URUGUAY HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUTSTANDINGLY PRO-AMERICAN. AMERICAN BUSINESS AND AMERICAN RESIDENTS IN URUGUAY ASSUME THE SAME RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS AS URUGUAYANS. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO DISCRIMINATION OR RESENTMENT WHICH IS SO PREVALENT IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES. IT IS FELT IN URUGUAY THAT THIS TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP AND GOODWILL SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AND MADE MUTUAL, ESPECIALLY IN A MOMENT OF URUGUAY'S NEED FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

THE UNITED STATES AS A NATION FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF FAIR PLAY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL HAS ALWAYS OFFERED ITS SINCERE FRIENDSHIP AND HELP TO THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD'S LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. IT HAS MAINTAINED THIS WORLD FRIENDSHIP THROUGH
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NUMEROUS AND COSTLY PROGRAMS OF AID AND ASSISTANCE. IN THE CASE OF URUGUAY, ALL PAST YEARS' ASSISTANCE WILL HAVE BEEN ABSOLUTELY

MEANINGLESS IF THIS POTENTIAL PROBLEM IS NOT
RESOLVED FAVORABLY.

IT IS THE HOPE OF THE UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
IN URUGUAY THAT THE USITC, WITH THE GREAT RESPONSIBILITY IT
ASSUMES ON THIS ISSUE, WILL STUDY THIS SITUATION WITH CARE AND
FORM ITS JUDGEMENT ON THE FOREGOING FACTS AND ON THE APPEAL OF
URUGUAY'S WORKING PEOPLE FOR FAIRNESS AND AN EQUITABLE DECISION.
ROGER J. HALOUA, PRESIDENT."
SIRACUSA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Disposition Comment:
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